

General Guidelines to the Construction Permit Process



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who we are and what we do.....	2
Department hours and location	2
What to know before you apply.....	3
City addresses and phone numbers	3
Who regulates what?	4,5
When is a construction permit needed?.....	6
When is a construction NOT permit needed?	6
Where do I begin?.....	6
In order to build - you will <u>always</u> need	7
In order to build - you <u>may</u> need	7
A permit can <u>not</u> be issued when.....	8
What are the steps in the process?	8
What are Condition/Holds?	9
When can I start work?	9
How long will the process take?.....	9

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Building Services Division is part of the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Planning and Building. The Building Services Division staff members:

- Process, review and issue construction permits
- Check building plans
- Inspect buildings under construction

Permit Technicians and Plans Examiners review your building plans to determine that there is compliance with all requirements of county ordinances, and the uniform building, plumbing, electrical and mechanical codes.

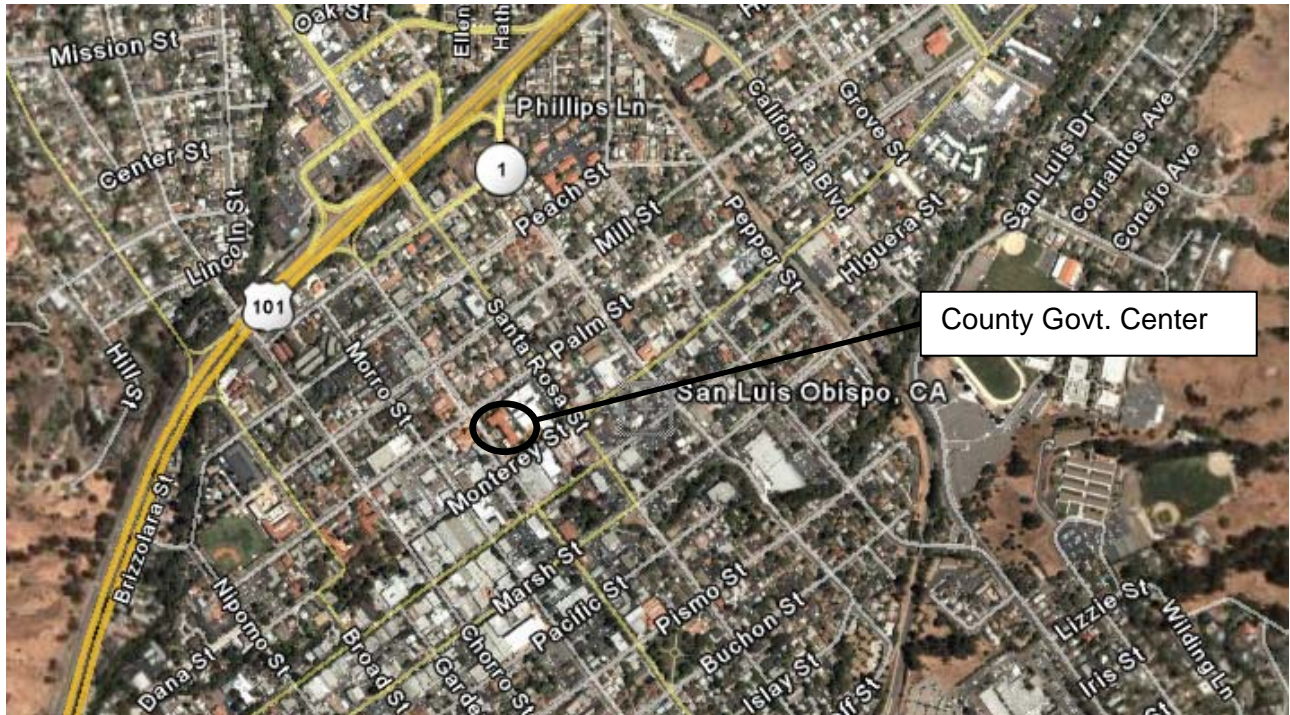
Building Inspectors visit your construction site periodically to ensure that your project complies with the building codes and your approved plans.

DEPARTMENT HOURS AND LOCATION

The Building Services Division is located on the second floor of the Old County Courthouse, Room 200 on the corner of Osos and Palm Streets, next to the County Government Center in downtown San Luis Obispo.

Our staff is available weekdays between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. You can reach the department by telephone at (805) 781-5600. From the North County (Atascadero, Paso Robles, Templeton, San Miguel, Shandon) call (805) 466-1262 [ext. 5600] or [the last 4-digits of the staff's desk phone]. From all other toll areas in the county call our toll free number (800) 834-4636 and enter the last 4-digits of the staff's desk phone.

To reach staff by e-mail, use the first name initial and last name followed by @co.slo.ca.us. For example: "John Doe" could be reached at jdoe@co.slo.ca.us. There is a staff directory on our web page.



WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU APPLY

When you contact the department, please have the property's Assessor's Parcel Number available so we can quickly identify the property and be better able to answer your questions. The Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) is a nine-digit number, separated into the following three groups:

- Assessor's Book Number
 - Page/Block Number
 - Parcel Number
- For example: 092-011-097

Your APN is shown on your property tax bill, on most title reports, and often on the deed to your property. If you know your APN you can find out what your zoning is over the phone by using the automated zoning information system or the "Zone Phone". Using a touch tone phone call (805) 788-2076. Follow the prompts, and enter your Assessor Parcel Number and listen for the zoning information about your property.

COUNTY BUILDING SERVICES ARE LIMITED TO UNINCORPORATED AREAS ONLY

The county has jurisdiction over development and construction in unincorporated areas only - those areas outside of incorporated city limits. If your property or project is located within a city, you should contact the appropriate city planning or building department for assistance. A list of these departments, with phone numbers and addresses appears below:

CITY OF ARROYO GRANDE
214 East Branch Street
Arroyo Grande, Ca. 93420
(805) 473-5420

6907 El Camino Real
Atascadero, Ca. 93422
(805) 461-5035

CITY OF ATASCADERO

CITY OF GROVER BEACH
154 South 8th Street

WHO REGULATES WHAT?

AGENCY	TELEPHONE	ADDRESS	WHAT THEY DO
County Agricultural Commissioner's Office	(805) 781-5910	2156 Sierra Way, Ste A San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93408	The county's agricultural experts, they monitor pesticide use and handle the county's official weights and measures.
Air Pollution Control Board (APCD)	(805) 781-5912	3433 Roberto Ct. San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93401	A regional agency that promotes and monitors air quality.
County Assessor	(805) 781-5643	County Government Center San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93408	Establishes the value of your property to determine the amount of property tax collected.
Cal Trans - State Department of Transportation	(805) 549-3111	50 Higuera Street San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93401	Manages and maintains the state highways in the county.
California Energy Commission	1-(800)-772-3300	1516 Ninth St. MS-25 Sacramento, Ca 95814--5512	Regulates all energy compliance (Title 24) within buildings
County Clerk Recorder	(805) 781-5080	1055 Monterey Street Suite D120 San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93401	Maintains all the records for the county, as well as acting as the Clerk for the Board of Supervisors.
County Public Works	(805) 781-5252	County Gov't Center San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93408	Records land division maps, issues encroachment permits, determines whether road widening or curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements are necessary and approves drainage plans.
County Fire Department (CDF)	(805) 543-4244	635 N. Santa Rosa St. San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93401	Responsible for providing fire protection services for the majority of the unincorporated areas of the county.
State Department of Fish and Game	(707) 944-5500 or (916) 653-7667	PO Box 6327 Los Osos, Ca. 93402	The State Department of Fish & Game issues stream alteration permits and implements the endangered species act.
County Health Department (Env. Health Division)	(805) 781-5544	2191 Johnson San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93401	Reviews the provisions of wells, cross connection and food services.

AGENCY	TELEPHONE	ADDRESS	WHAT THEY DO
Housing and Community Development (HCD)	(951) 830-6507 or (951) 782-4420	3737 Main Street Suite 400 Riverside Ca. 92501	Permits permanent and accessory buildings in mobile home parks; permits changes to mobile homes
Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)	(805) 549-3147	895 Aerovista Place Suite 101 San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93401	A state agency that issues and enforces permits affecting water quality.
School Districts	Varies	Varies	There are 13 school districts in the county. The school districts collect school fees associated with construction permits.
Special Districts	Varies	Varies	Districts established by the residents of an unincorporated area in order to obtain services. These can be water or sewer provision, fire protection or flood control.

WHEN IS A CONSTRUCTION PERMIT NEEDED?

A construction permit is needed for almost any project that involves building or altering a structure or its plumbing, mechanical or electrical systems. Additionally, any project that includes grading, where soil will be removed and/or filled in, usually requires a permit. (For more information, refer to the information bulletin "Guide to Residential Grading"). **Permits are required for the following, but not limited to these items listed.**

- Replacement of a Forced air unit (FAU) or water heater.
- Deck over 30" to lowest grade within 5'.
- Addition to house or garage.
- Structural repair due to rot or termite damage.
- Patio enclosure or sun room installation.
- Replacement or addition to existing plumbing, electrical or mechanical systems.
- Solar electrical system installation or addition.
- Interior remodeling including but not limited to nonstructural framing, and/or drywall installation.

All of the procedures and regulations used to determine when a permit is necessary and also how to review that permit, are set forth in county ordinances and/or state law. Such documents include the:

- 1997 Uniform Administrative Code
- 2001 Calif. Building Code (1997UBC), 2001 Calif. Mechanical Code (2000UMC), 2001 Calif. Plumbing Code (2000UPC) and 2004 Calif. Electrical (2002NEC)
- Building and Construction Ordinance (Title 19 of the County Code)
- Land Use Ordinance - Coastal and Inland (Titles 22 & 23 of the County Code)

All of these documents are available for review at the Planning and Building Department.

WHEN IS A CONSTRUCTION PERMIT NOT NEEDED?

- One story detached accessory structures used as storage provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet, and does not exceed 12 feet tall outside of the front yard set back and not within 3 feet of the side and rear property lines.
- Fences not over 6' 6" and not installed in the front yard set back.
- Moveable cases, counters and partitions not over 5' 9" tall.
- Retaining walls that do not support more than 3' of fill unless surcharged or within 2' of a property line.
- Platforms walks and driveways not more than 30' above grade within 5', and not over any basement or story below.
- Window awnings supported by an exterior wall of a residence or private garage when projecting not more than 54".
- Water tanks supported directly on grade if the capacity does not exceed 5000 gallons, and the ratio of diameter to height does not exceed 2:1.
- Prefabricated pools and/or spas accessory to a residence where the pool walls are entirely above grade and the pool capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons.*
- Installation of cabinets and finishes such as flooring or paint.
- Re-roofing where the roofing materials are like composition to composition, or lightweight tile to light weight tile, and roof does not require new sheeting to be installed.
- Flatwork such as a patio slab.
- Nonstructural repair work of a minor nature. (replacement of an electrical or plumbing fixture)

* Unless otherwise exempted, separate plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits will be required for the above exempted. Exemption from permits shall not be construed to authorize any work to be completed in a manner that is a violation of any of the applicable codes, or any other laws or ordinances.

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

When you are planning a minor project, such as a re-roofing or a new electrical service, you can obtain an over-the-counter permit. For more information about over-the-counter permits, please call 781-5600.

When you plan to construct or significantly alter a building, you will need to obtain a construction permit. You can obtain the construction permit application form you need by accessing our website at www.sloplanning.org. If you do not have access to the internet, or if you have questions about the construction permit application, please call (805) 781-5600, and ask for a Permit Technician.

TO DO LIST

STEP ONE: GATHER INFORMATION

- ✓ Study applicable planning and building information handouts
- ✓ Talk with a public information planner to obtain zoning information such as setbacks, height limits, etc.

STEP TWO: PREPARE A PRELIMINARY PLAN

- ✓ Prepare a simple plan showing property lines, easements, natural features, existing and proposed development and rough building elevations and floor plans.
- ✓ Describe in writing those elements not easily drawn.

STEP THREE: GO TO THE PERMIT CENTER

- ✓ Show your preliminary plans to a public information planner and plans examiner and get early feedback about requirements and standards.
- ✓ Determine if scope of work requires services of a draftsman, architect or engineer. Determine if your grading will trigger a separate major grading permit (grading on slopes greater than 10%).

STEP FOUR: PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION AND PLANS

- ✓ Fill out applications for all of the permits that you will need.
- ✓ Prepare all of the required materials that you must submit with your applications. Application checklists are available with all permit application packages.

STEP FIVE: FILE YOUR APPLICATION

- ✓ Make an appointment to submit your application.
- ✓ Submit all required plans, materials, reports, and approvals.
- ✓ Pay application fees.

IN ORDER TO BUILD - YOU WILL ALWAYS NEED:

- A. A **ZONING CLEARANCE** from the Planning Division. This is necessary to determine if the use is allowed, the project is being constructed to meet all the zoning requirements, and if any previous approvals required special conditions, or limited uses. This is done as you submit your construction permit.
- B. Evidence that your parcel is a **LEGAL LOT**. This may require that you provide the first deed that created the property in its present form.
- C. Either a **WILL-SERVE LETTER** from the local water and/or sewer purveyor **OR APPROVAL FOR USE OF AN INDIVIDUAL WELL** from the County Environmental Health Department.
- D. An approved **FIRE SAFETY PLAN** from the County Fire Department or your local fire district.
- E. Evidence that you have paid your **SCHOOL FACILITIES FEES to the appropriate school district**.
- F. An issued **CONSTRUCTION PERMIT** from the Building Division.

IN ORDER TO BUILD - YOU MAY NEED:

- A. A **LAND USE PERMIT** may be necessary to authorize the use. If you attended a pre-application meeting with a public information planner, they can inform you if a land use permit is necessary.
- B. A **SOILS REPORT OR OTHER GEOLOGIC STUDY** when required by the Building Services Division.

- C. A **GRADING PERMIT** may be required. This could include an environmental review when grading on slopes over 10%..
- D. **SPECIAL ENGINEERING** may be required to be performed for your private sewage disposal system, the structural components of your project and/or the site drainage system.
- E. **RECORDED DOCUMENTS** may need to be completed before a permit is issued. These include Avigation and Open Space Easements, Secondary Dwelling Agreements, and/or Voluntary Mergers.
- F. **OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS** may need to be obtained where applicable; for example: Regional Water Quality Control Board, Air Pollution Control District, Fish and Game, Public Works, etc.

A PERMIT CANNOT BE ISSUED WHEN:

- ✖ **NOT A PERMITTED USE** - If a use is not permitted by either the zoning or general plan.
- ✖ **TOO MANY DWELLINGS** – If the number of dwellings allowed on the property already exists, no additional dwelling can be built on that property.
- ✖ **ILLEGAL LOT** - If the lot was not created in compliance with the Subdivision Map Act or local ordinances.
- ✖ **MORATORIUM** - If the site is within an area under a construction moratorium.
- ✖ **EXISTING VIOLATION** - If there is a land use violation on the site that will not be resolved with the permit.
- ✖ **NO ALLOCATION** - If there is no allocation or exemption granted under the Growth Management Ordinance (residential only) or local services district growth management plan.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN THE PROCESS?

Many of these steps take place concurrently.

- A. **Initial Review** This step will determine if your project is allowed within the land use category (zoning), set your fees and the requirements for setbacks and height, identify the other agencies that need to review your project, identify whether your construction plans are complete enough to allow processing, and identify the initial holds on your permit application.
- B. **Address Check** This will determine if the street address associated with your project is consistent with the county addressing system and if your project must go through the road naming process. (For more information, refer to the information bulletin "Guide to the Road Naming Process".)
- C. **Public Work Review**. The County Public Work Department will review the project to identify drainage, solid waste, and curb, gutter and sidewalk requirements, and to determine if you need an encroachment permit.
- D. **Fire Department Review** The fire department that will serve your project will determine if your project requires a fire safety plan, which might include improved access to your site, a water storage tank, and other fire prevention measures. If a fire safety plan is required, you will need to contact CDF or the local fire agency to submit the plan for approval and this plan will need to be included when you return your construction plans for correction.

- E. **Land Use Review/Zoning Clearance.** This review will determine if your project is in compliance with land use permit conditions you were required to fulfill before beginning construction. (For more information, refer to the information bulletin “Guide to Condition Completion”.)
- F. **Site Inspection.** The building inspector will visit the site to determine any obvious physical problems (e.g., expansive soils) and any existing land use violations (e.g., unpermitted buildings). Because finding a particular undeveloped parcel in an area without street addresses can be difficult, site identification signs are provided. A sign must be posted soon after you submit your application in a conspicuous location, easily visible from the main road leading to the property, in order to assist the building inspector in locating the property. If the property is difficult to locate, it may be necessary to use more than one sign.
- G. **Plan Review.** Plan review is completed to determine whether your plans comply with construction ordinances/codes and land use regulations, and to provide you with a list of any necessary corrections.
- H. **Other Agency Review.** Agencies that are required by state or local law to review your plans, such as the County Health Department, Air Pollution Control District and Cal Trans, may require that additional measures be addressed before or during the construction process.
- I. **Permit Issuance.** Once you have completed all conditions/holds and your final fees are paid, your construction permit is issued.

WHAT ARE CONDITIONS/HOLDS?

Conditions/Holds are those items that need to be completed before your permit can be issued. For example, school fees will need to be paid to the school district and the signed form returned to the county before your permit can be issued. This would show up as a “hold”.

WHEN CAN I START WORK?

It is very important that no work be done on the building site until the permit is actually issued. This prohibition includes grading, or moving a mobile home onto the site. The first site inspection, completed prior to issuance, often reveals special problems that may require changes to the proposed plans. This is one reason why it is very important that no work be done to the site prior to issuance of your building permit.

HOW LONG WILL THE PROCESS TAKE?

Construction permits can usually be issued within two months of submittal if the application and plans are complete, and you respond promptly to all requests for information. Applications are only valid for one year from the time they are submitted, so it is important that you provide any corrections in a timely manner. You can request, in writing, a one-time 180-day extension.